

Macquarrie on "Being"

Isn't what Macquarrie means by "Being," delimited as it is in relation to "becoming," "appearance," and "ought to be," essentially what Whitehead means by "creativity" (*Principles of Christian Theology*: 101 f.)?

A positive answer is clearly suggested by comparing Macquarrie's statements, "being is the *transcendens* pure and simple" (quoting Heidegger) and "Being is nothing apart from its appearances" (99, 102), with Whitehead's statements, "In all philosophic theory there is an ultimate which is actual in virtue of its accidents. It is only then capable of characterization through its actual embodiments, and apart from these accidents is devoid of actuality. In the philosophy of organism this ultimate is termed 'creativity.' . . ." and "'creativity' is the universal of universals characterizing ultimate matter of fact" (*PR*: 10 f., 31). The essential similarity is further confirmed when Macquarrie says, "Being, strictly speaking, 'is' not; but being 'lets be'" (103); for, according to Whitehead, "the epochal occasion has two sides. On one side it is a mode of creativity bringing together the universe. . . . On the other side, the occasion is the creature. . . . But there are not two actual entities, the creativity and the creature. There is only one entity which is the self-creating creature" (*RM*: 101 f.; cf. 92).

But, significantly, Whitehead denies that creativity and God are the same, whereas Macquarrie evidently wants to identify them. Thus Whitehead says, "In the philosophy of organism this ultimate is termed 'creativity'; and God is its primordial, non-temporal accident" (*PR*: 11). Macquarrie, on the other hand, wishes to press the question "whether the theologian too must not fight against the forgetting of being, and try to reconceive God not as *a* being, however exalted, but as being, which must in any case be more ultimate than any being" (*Principles of Christian Theology*: 106). Macquarrie is also explicit that "Being not only is not *a* being, but is not the sum of beings or the totality of beings or an all-inclusive being" (109).